Russ Deaton

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HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Governor

TO:	**Chancellors, Presidents, Provosts, and TCAT Directors** **Tennessee Institutions of Higher Education**
FROM:	**Russ Deaton**
SUBJECT:	Ready to Reconnect: Call for Proposals
DATE:	**February 10, 2015**

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is pleased to provide you with the Ready to Reconnect Grant Competition Request for Proposals.

As stated in the attached RFP, grants up to fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) will be available to eligible entities for a twelve month period to facilitate development and implementation of institutional projects to improve practices, policies and internal operations that support adult learner success.

To be eligible for these grants, THEC is asking institutions to first complete the Adult Learner Focused Institution (ALFI) assessment by **May 15, 2015**, available through the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). Through a self-assessment from faculty and administration and an inventory of adult learners at the institution, the ALFI process provides a detailed report of strengths and challenges based on how the institution serves adults.

The grants will be awarded for the purpose of providing services and support to adult learners to increase their success on the basis of the challenges revealed through the ALFI assessment results. THEC will award grants to institutions that identify innovative solutions to the ALFI-identified challenges and build sustainable support systems that significantly improve outcomes for adult students.

Please be aware of a few important details:

- THEC will be hosting two informational webinars. Interested institutions must participate in **one** of the two webinars, offered on **February 17 at 1:00 PM central standard time** (2:00 PM eastern standard time) and **February 23 at 10:00 AM central standard time** (11:00 AM eastern standard time). Webinar details will be posted on THEC's website (www.tn.gov/thec) as soon as they are available.
- A Letter of Intent to Participate is due no later than **5:00 PM (CST) on Monday, March 2, 2015**, and full proposals are due on **July 15, 2015 by 5:00 PM (CST)**. Please see grant timeline on page 5 of the RFP for key dates regarding the application and review process.
- Only one submission is allowed per institution. This RFP announcement is being shared with presidents, TCAT directors, academic affairs leadership, members of the Prior Learning Assessment Task Force and institutional adult learner contacts.

THEC looks forward to receiving your submissions.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS
and
GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

INSTITUTIONAL MINI-GRANT COMPETITION:

READY TO RECONNECT

NOTIFICATION OF INTENT DUE

March 2, 2015

PROPOSALS DUE

July 15, 2015

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Request for Proposals

Overview

Tennessee's Drive to 55 relies largely on the recruitment, retention, and completion of adults in higher education. Adults currently make up over 27%, or 55,000, of enrolled public undergraduate students, and the prospective adult student pool of Tennesseans with some college but no degree is over 900,000. In most cases and with the right support, adult learners academically perform as well as or better than traditional age students. At every public higher education institution in Tennessee, adults earn a higher share of credentials compared to their enrollment. Attracting adults and providing them with appropriate supports has the capability to boost completion rates and the overall educational attainment rate in Tennessee.

In order to provide adult students with the right tools to be successful in their postsecondary goals, institutions must examine how they currently serve this population. As Tennessee makes strides to increase the number of adults returning to college, institutions will need to be adequately prepared to serve adult learners. To provide assistance to institutions in this endeavor, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is releasing small competitive grants to public and private not-for-profit postsecondary education institutions to improve practices, policies and internal operations that support adult learner success.

I. *College Access Challenge Grant Program*

Ready to Reconnect is a component of Tennessee's College Access Challenge Grant. The College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) is a federal formula grant program designed to foster partnerships among federal, state, and local governments and philanthropic organizations through matching challenge grants that are aimed at increasing the number of underserved students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Under such guidelines, THEC aims to support the state's innovative reform environment through implementation of the CACG award. The focus of the Ready to Reconnect grant program is on postsecondary retention and completion of adult learners in Tennessee through outreach and support.

II. *Ready to Reconnect Grant Details*

THEC will award the Ready to Reconnect grants to institutions through a competitive proposal process. To be eligible for this grant, applicants must first complete the Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) assessment through the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). Institutions that have already completed the ALFI within the last five years prior to this announcement are also eligible.

The ALFI process provides a detailed report of strengths and challenges based on how the institution serves adults through 1) a self-assessment from faculty and administration and 2) an inventory of adult learners at the institution. This robust assessment process provides comparative data on how the perceptions of adult students match up to the perceptions of faculty and administration. This allows the institution to better serve adult students from data-driven and evidence-based approaches. More information on the ALFI assessment process can be found on page 7. Institutions will be responsible for the ALFI cost which will serve as a match for the grant proposal.

Ready to Reconnect grants will be awarded for the purpose of providing services and support to adult learners to increase their success on the basis of the challenges revealed through the ALFI assessment results**.** THEC will award grants to institutions that identify innovative solutions to the ALFI-identified challenges and build sustainable support systems that significantly improve outcomes for adult students. THEC is invested in initiatives that support student success and the State's postsecondary completion agenda. The Ready to Reconnect grants provide an opportunity to help institutions improve higher education access and success for adult learners across Tennessee. THEC will award Ready to Reconnect grants on **August 3, 2015**; program implementation will begin on September 1, 2015 and span a 12-month period. The program should account for sustainability and continue beyond the funding of the grant.

A. *Eligibility*

Public and private not-for-profit community colleges, Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs), four-year colleges and universities will be considered eligible for the Ready to Reconnect grant when they 1) participate in one of two scheduled webinars, 2) submit a statement of intent to participate, 3) complete the ALFI process, and 4) submit a grant proposal by the dates outlined in Section II.B.

B. *Timeline*

In order to answer questions and provide further information, CAEL and THEC will provide two webinars for institutions interested in the ALFI process on **February 17 at 1:00 PM central standard time** (2:00 PM eastern standard time) and **February 23 at 10:00 AM central standard time** (11:00 AM eastern standard time). Participation in **one** of the two webinars is required to be eligible for the grant. Institutions must submit a statement of their intent to participate in the Ready to Reconnect grant by **March 2, 2015**.

All participating institutions should complete the ALFI assessment process within two months, with a suggested start date of **March 4, 2015** and a completion deadline of **May 15, 2015**. In order to meet the completion deadline, it is highly recommended that each institution establish an ALFI account with CAEL by **March 4, 2015**. Institutions will receive the ALFI report from CAEL no later than **June 15, 2015**, and Ready to Reconnect grant proposals are due on **July 15, 2015**. The grant awards will be announced on **August 3, 2015**. The grant period will last for 12-months following the award of the grants. Please see Appendix A for an application checklist.

Ready to Reconnect Grant Timeline	
Item	Date/Deadline
THEC releases Ready to Reconnect RFP	02/10/2015
Institution participates in one of two CAEL and THEC hosted ALFI Webinars	02/17 and 02/23
Institution Submits Intent to Participate to THEC	03/02/2015
Institution Establishes ALFI Account with CAEL	03/04/2015
Institutions Complete ALFI Process	05/15/2015
CAEL Releases ALFI Report to Institutions	06/15/2015
Institutions Submit Grant Proposals to THEC	07/15/2015
THEC Announces Grant Awards	08/03/2015
Institutions Begin Grant Activities	09/01/2015
Institutions Complete Grant Activities	08/30/2016

III. *Description of Components*

A. *ALFI Webinars for Institutions*

Institutions are required to participate in **one** of two webinars to be eligible for the grant. Webinars are offered twice to ensure that institutions can participate and have two different options, and both webinars will have the same information. CAEL and THEC will host and facilitate two webinars for institutions interested in the ALFI process on **February 17 at 1:00 PM central standard time** (2:00 PM eastern standard time) and **February 23 at 10:00 AM central standard time** (11:00 AM eastern standard time).

> *Note***: Webinar details will be provided on www.tn.gov/thec. Please check the site for information on how to access the webinar. Direct all questions regarding the webinars to Samantha Lamere at Samantha.lamere@tn.gov.**

The webinar content will include:

- THEC will address the process and timeline of the mini-grant competition;
- CAEL will explain the ALFI assessment process and answer any questions about becoming an adult learner focused institution;
- Representatives from Middle Tennessee State University will provide insight into their experience as an existing ALFI institution.

B. *Intent to Participate Statement Requirements*

THEC is requiring institutions to send letters of intent to indicate their commitment to both undergo the ALFI process and to use the results in development of a grant proposal. The letters of intent should also identify a campus liaison with whom THEC and CAEL will communicate for the remainder of the grant. Each letter must include the signature of the college or university president, chancellor, or TCAT director. Following the ALFI webinars, letters are due from institutions to THEC via email to Jessica Gibson at Jessica.Gibson@tn.gov by **March 2, 2015.** The subject line should state 'Ready to Reconnect Letter of Intent' with the institution's name.

C. *Submission of Grant Application*

Institutions will focus on challenges identified in the ALFI process, related to the nine principles listed in section IV. Each institution will have approximately one month upon receipt of the ALFI report to finalize the grant proposal but should consider elements of the grant throughout the process. The grant proposal submission deadline is **July 15, 2015**. THEC will award grants on **August 3, 2015**, and implementation will begin one month following the award and conclude after 12 months. The expectation is that the program will be sustainable in nature and can continue beyond the period of the grant. Please see the rubric in **Appendix E** for scoring details.

IV.   Adult Learner Focused Institution (ALFI) Information

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) aims to help every higher education institution become an Adult Learner Focused Institution (ALFI). CAEL has established nine principles that outline the ways in which an institution can meet the unique needs of adult learners. These nine elements will be the basis of your institution's ALFI assessment.

CAEL's Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners[1]:

1. Outreach: Conducts its outreach to adult learners by overcoming barriers in time, place, and tradition in order to create lifelong access to educational opportunities.

2. Life and Career Planning: Addresses adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment in order to assess and align its capacities to help learners reach their goals.

3. Financing: Promotes choice using an array of payment options for adult learners in order to expand equity and financial flexibility.

4. Assessment of Learning Outcomes: Defines and assesses the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by adult learners—both from the curriculum and from life and work experience—in order to assign credit and confer degrees with rigor.

5. Teaching-Learning Process: Faculty uses multiple methods of instruction (including experiential and problem-based methods) for adult learners in order to connect curricular concepts to useful knowledge and skills.

6. Student Support Systems: Assists adult learners using comprehensive academic and student support systems in order to enhance students' capacities to become self-directed, lifelong learners.

7. Technology: Uses technology to provide relevant and timely information and to enhance the learning experience.

8. Strategic Partnerships: Engages in strategic relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with employers and other organizations in order to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners.

9. Transitions: Supports guided pathways that lead into and from the institution's programs and services in order to ensure that students' learning will apply usefully to achieving their educational and career goals.

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[1] Council for Adult and Experiential Learning: *Discover CAEL's Principles for Serving Adult Learners Effectively*.

ALFI Assessment Toolkit Information

CAEL offers the ALFI Assessment Toolkit, a pair of survey instruments that are based on CAEL's Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learner. The ALFI assessment is a two-part survey, and pinpoints institutional strengths and challenges associated with serving adult students from 1) a self-assessment survey and 2) a survey of adult student satisfaction. Institutions can develop and prioritize strategic plans for supporting adult students from the results of these assessments. These two items compose the ALFI assessment which addresses areas of improvement.

> 1) *Institutional Self-Assessment Survey***:** The Institutional Self-Assessment Survey (ISAS), developed by CAEL and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), is completed by a cross-institutional team of administrators and faculty appointed by the institution; the ISAS evaluates a wide range of activities, policies, and practices for adult students in the institution—from financial policies to assessing prior learning. It offers a unique opportunity for dialogue about adult learners across departments.

> - ISAS Survey Categories: The ISAS scans eight key areas. They are as follows: Institutional background; mission, leadership, and organizational structure; recruitment and orientation; tuition and financial aid; teaching and learning; faculty recruitment and development; student services; and key constituencies.

> - Completing the ISAS: There are approximately 50 items on the survey. One survey is completed and submitted by the institutional team.

> 2) The second component of the ALFI assessment is the *Adult Learner Inventory***.** The Adult Learner Inventory (ALI), developed by CAEL and Noel-Levitz, is completed by students 25 and older who are earning certificates or undergraduate degrees at your institution. The ALI measures both satisfaction and levels of importance. In the end, the institution will receive a list of strengths (high importance, high satisfaction) and challenges (high importance, low satisfaction) that show how to better meet adult learners' needs. The ALI also reveals what issues should receive top priority so the institution can focus strategic planning efforts on the issues adult students identify. ALI focuses on eight of the nine CAEL ALFI Principles.

> - ALI Items: The ALI includes the following: Forty-seven items rated for importance and satisfaction with ten optional items defined by the institution, rated for importance and satisfaction; two summary items rating overall satisfaction and likelihood student will recommend to other adult students; eighteen demographic items (gender, age, employment, class load, etc.); and two optional demographic items (one major/program and one other).

> - ALI Scores: The ALI scores include importance scores, satisfaction scores, and performance gap scores.

Used together, 1) the ***Institutional Self-Assessment Survey*** (ISAS) and 2) the ***Adult Learner Inventory*** (ALI) compare faculty and administration views of existing adult programs with the perceptions of current adult students, providing a complete snapshot that you will use to develop your grant proposal.

<u>Overview of the ALFI Report:</u>

- A detailed campus report on the findings from both surveys.
- Comparative data on how the perceptions of adult students match up to the perceptions of faculty and administration.
- National benchmarking data to compare an institution's results with institutions serving adults nationwide.
- The challenges identified in the report will be what your institution uses for the grant proposal.

ALFI Toolkit Costs

Each participating institution will be expected to cover the costs of the ALFI Toolkit; this cost will not be paid for with Ready to Reconnect grant funds. The cost will be considered a match from institutions. The Ready to Reconnect grant will only fund implementation strategies to address challenges revealed through the ALFI. To order ALFI Tools, please visit:

ISAS - http://www.cael.org/pdfs/ISAS_OrderForm0807.pdf;

ALI - http://www.cael.org/pdfs/ALI_CAEL_Order_Form08.pdf.

- Cost for ISAS:
    o CAEL Members – $3150
    o CAEL Non-Members – $3900
- Cost for ALI varies:
    o Set up fee – $250
    o Invitations to students –$0.25 each
    o Analysis of responses – $2.30 each
    o Handling fee – 5% applied to the total

ALFI Distinction

Institutions that complete the ALFI process will be recognized as being an adult friendly institution by the state of Tennessee. Adult students who are considering continuing their education will have access to the full list of institutions who have received ALFI distinction.

V.   *Proposal Requirements*

Proposals can earn up to 100 points based on the following application components. Each application submitted **must** include:

A.   <u>Cover Page</u>

Applicants must complete the Ready to Reconnect cover page and include all required signatures (**Appendix B**). Applicants must designate a project manager and a primary contact (these can be the same individual) to report to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). Applicants should identify the contact(s) by listing first and last name, title, and contact information on the cover page.

B.   <u>Verification of ALFI Completion</u>

Proposals must include the verification form authorized by CAEL (**Appendix C**) to confirm that the ALFI process has been completed.

C.   <u>Illustration of Current Context</u> *(20 Points)*
a.   *Focus Area Description*

Proposals must include a detailed explanation of why the institution chose to focus on a particular challenge area. Focus Area descriptions should 1) identify which **one** of the nine ALFI areas your institution selected; and 2) explain the rationale for choosing the Focus Area.

b.   *Discussion of Challenges*

Proposals must provide context for why the Focus Area is a challenge for the institution by addressing the following:

1. How your institution's structural, capacity-related, financial, and other realities contribute to making your Focus Area a challenge.
2. How the current status of your Focus Area affects the access or success of adult students at your institution.

c.   *Discussion of Strengths*

Proposals must address how the institution's strengths, as identified by the ALFI, can be leveraged to address the challenges of the Focus Area.

D. **Project Description** *(55 Points)*
    a. ***Ready to Reconnect Project Description***

Proposals must include a detailed description of the proposed activities and identification of any partnering organizations implementing the initiative. Project descriptions should provide:

1. Description of the chosen approach, the associated activities and the rationale for choosing said approach;
2. Description of anticipated outcomes in terms of impacts on student access, retention, and completion, and on internal functions;
3. List of individuals responsible for managing, coordinating or carrying out activities and their associated responsibilities;
4. Elements of collaboration:
   a. Internal collaboration across institutional departments and offices is required. Applicants should provide a brief summary and proof of internal collaboration in the form of a signed letter from collaborators;
   b. External collaboration with community-based entities and organizations are encouraged where appropriate, but not required. Where external collaboration is anticipated, please provide a brief summary and signed letters of collaboration from partners.

   Note: Letters of commitment to collaboration do not count toward the 15 page limit.

5. Month-by-month timeline, from September 2015 through August 2016, with anticipated deliverables listed.

    b. ***Ready to Reconnect Project Goals and Evaluation***

Proposals must address how the Ready to Reconnect project and shorter-term goals will support the institution's long-term goals for serving adult learners. Specifically, proposals must include the following:

1. Long-term (by 2025) goals for serving adult learners at the institution
2. Short-term goals specifically for the institution's Ready to Reconnect project
3. Explanation of how the institution's Ready to Reconnect activities and its short-term goals will contribute to reaching its longer term goals for effectively serving adult learners.

Proposals must also provide an evaluation plan which includes the following:

1. Desired project outcomes;
2. Key performance indicators for meeting the short-term and long-term goals;
3. Description of how progress toward short-term and long-term goals will be tracked and evaluated;
4. List of institutional personnel responsible for evaluation.

c. Ready to Reconnect Budget Narrative and Budget Summary Form

As part of the project description institutions should submit a budget and a corresponding narrative. Specifically, institutions will complete the Project Budget Summary Form (Appendix D), including the line item detail. Additionally, the institution will provide justification for this budget by including a written narrative for each budget line item which explains: 1) the basis for estimating the costs for each line item and 2) how the major cost items relate to the proposed project elements. Maximum allowance for each institution to request from a Ready to Reconnect grant is $50,000. If an institution plans to use grant funds towards salary/benefits, those grant funds may not cover more than 50% of the salary and benefits costs and the institution must address how it plans to continue funding the position past the grant term in Section E, Sustainability Plan.

Note: The Project Budget Summary Form and corresponding budget narrative do not count toward the 15 page proposal limit.

E.   Sustainability Plan *(25 Points)*

Applicants will provide a detailed explanation of how the Ready to Reconnect grant project elements will be sustained beyond the life of the mini-grant. The proposal should not simply account for a one-time project, but instead should present the start of a change at the institution. Therefore, the sustainability plan should describe how the institution plans to continue the work initially funded by the Ready to Reconnect grant, and how the institution plans to adjust, in terms of institutional capacity, personnel, dedicated funding and/or other resources that will be brought to bear.

VI.   Preparation of the Application

Listed below are the required components of an acceptable application. The narrative sections of the proposal must be 1.5-spaced and the font used must not be smaller than 11-point. This narrative portion of the application (Context Overview - Section C, Project Description - Section D, and Sustainability Plan – Section E) shall **not** exceed 15 pages. The proposal sections are labeled and must be returned in order, as shown:

➢ **Cover Page (Section A; Appendix B)**

Signatures required.

➢ **Verification of ALFI Completion (Section B; Appendix C)**

Signatures required.

➢ **Illustration of Current Context (Section C)**

➢ **Project Description (Section D)**

   o **Project Budget Summary Form (Appendix D)**

➢ **Sustainability Plan (Section E)**

VII. *Proposal Submission and Review*

A. **Submission**

Applicants must submit a full proposal with signatures to THEC electronically. Electronic submission should be sent to Jessica Gibson at Jessica.Gibson@tn.gov. To be considered for funding, proposals must be received at THEC no later than 5:00 PM central standard time on **July 15, 2015**. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

NOTE: Each institution is only allowed to submit one application.

B. **Review Process**

As proposals are received, they will be reviewed by THEC staff for completeness and compliance with eligibility requirements. Any questions about significant omissions from a proposal or about applicant eligibility will be referred to the proposing institution.

A review panel composed of readers external to the Policy, Planning, and Research Division at THEC will evaluate eligible applications in light of the required application components. The panel will review each eligible application and make recommendations to THEC. The scores and recommendations from the review panel will be the primary determinant of successful proposals and will form the basis for negotiation and final selection. Should there be system-wide trends, THEC reserves the right to award remaining grant funds to the Tennessee Board of Regents and University of Tennessee systems.

Following the review process, THEC will notify the primary contact to discuss any modifications that may be required of selected institutions. THEC intends to fund proposals that show the most promise to create a systematic change at the institutional level to positively influence the outcomes and attainment of adult students.

VIII. **Award Administration**

A. **Award Conditions**

The amount of funding awarded to each institution or system may vary based on institutional size, number of students served, project activities, and resources needed to fully and successfully implement the systems to better serve adult students. Awards are contingent upon THEC receiving funding from the College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACGP), availability of funds within the grant budget, and upon the State's evaluation of funded programs for compliance with project requirements and effectiveness of project implementation.

B. **Grant Requirements**

Each eligible contracted institution must report its progress in meeting short-term goals identified in the grant proposal to THEC. In order to build a community of practice, contracted institutions must participate in bimonthly conference calls with other institutions focusing on the same area to share progress and ideas, based on number of participants. Further information regarding reporting requirements and forms will be provided by THEC after the grant is awarded.

APPENDIX A – Application Checklist

Ready to Reconnect **Institutional Mini-Grant Competition**

Application Checklist

Status	Item	Date(s)
	Participate in (one of two) ALFI Webinars	02/17/2015 *or* 02/23/2015
	Submit Intent to Participate to jessica.gibson@tn.gov	03/02/2015
	Establish ALFI Account with CAEL	03/04/2015
	Complete the ALFI Assessment Process	05/15/2015
	CAEL Releases ALFI Report to Institutions	06/15/2015
	Submit *Ready to Reconnect* Grant Proposal	07/15/2015

Ready to Reconnect Grant
Request for Proposals
COVER PAGE

Applying Institution:	
Project Title:	
Project Manager:	
Primary Contact Name (If Different from Project Manager):	
Title:	
Address (Include County):	

Telephone:		Fax:	
E-Mail:			

Amount of Ready to Reconnect Funds Requested	$

Certification by Higher Education Institution President and Project Manager:

The designee certifies that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the information in this application is correct and that the filing of this application is duly authorized by the applicant organization specified above.

_____

Name and Title of Authorized Project Manager

_____   _____

Signature of Authorized Project Manager   Date

_____

Name and Title of Higher Education Institution President

_____   _____

Signature of Higher Education Institution President   Date

Adult Learner Focused Institution (ALFI)
VERIFICATION

Applying Institution:			
Project Manager:			
Primary Contact Name (If Different from Project Manager):			
Title:			
Address (Include County):			
Telephone:		Fax:	
E-Mail:			
ALFI Process Start Date:			
ALFI Process End Date:			

Certification by Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and Project Manager:

The designee certifies that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the information in this application is correct and that the filing of this application is duly authorized by the applicant organization specified above.

_____

Name and Title of Authorized Project Manager

_____   _____

Signature of Authorized Project Manager   Date

_____

Name and Title of CAEL Representative

_____   _____

Signature of CAEL Representative   Date

Budget Category	Item Description	Amount	Institutional Match*
Personnel Costs	Salaries		
	Benefits		
	Operating Costs/Supplies		
	Subtotal		
External assistance/Consulting services			
	Subtotal		
Marketing & Communications			
	Subtotal		
Travel & Meetings			
	Subtotal		
Technology/Software/ Equipment			
	Subtotal		
Training			
	Subtotal		
Other (please describe)			
	Subtotal		
TOTAL			

*Only required on Salaries and Benefits line items

Applying Institution_____

Project Category_____

Funding Recommendation (Yes, No, Yes with modifications) _____

☐ **Completed ALFI Process**

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Focus Area Description	**5**		
- Does the proposal include rationale for choosing a specific focus area? - Does the applying institution provide justification or reference the outcomes in the ALFI assessment that lead to choosing this area of focus? Scoring Range 5- The proposal includes rationale for choosing a specific focus area and provides justification for that choice. 3- The proposal includes rationale but does not provide adequate justification, or the proposal provides justification of outcomes but no rationale for choosing the focus area. 1-The rationale and justification for choosing a specific focus area are unclear.			
Challenges and Strengths	**15**		
- Does the proposal include an explanation of challenges? - Does the proposal show evidence of how challenges affect the access or success of adult learners at the institution? -Does the proposal illustrate how strengths will be leveraged to tackle the challenges? Scoring Range 15- The proposal includes a detailed explanation of structural challenges at the institution and how strengths will be leveraged to address challenges. 7- The proposal includes an explanation of challenges but may lack sufficient detail in how to address the challenges. 1-It is unclear that the institution has considered challenges identified in the ALFI process.			

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Project Description	**30**		
-Does the proposal include a detailed description of the project and how it will impact adult students at the institution? Does the project design clearly align with the chosen focus area? -Does the proposal clearly articulate how the proposed project will increase postsecondary access, retention, and completion of adult students? - Does the proposed project list responsible individuals and how they will contribute to the project? - Does the proposal include collaboration efforts and provide a detailed description of internal collaboration at the institution? -Does the proposal include a month-by-month timeline with deliverables listed? Scoring Range 30-Proposal includes a detailed description of the project, proposed interventions, and how the initiative will increase adult student retention and completion. Proposal includes responsible parties and a detailed month-by-month timeline with deliverables. Proposal includes a detailed collaboration plan with internal and external collaborators. Project addresses the chosen focus area from the ALFI. 15-Proposal includes detailed description of the project and proposed intervention. The proposal does not clearly articulate how the intervention will lead to increased retention and completion <u>or</u> the project is not supported by relevant research/ practice. Proposal includes responsible parties and a detailed timeline. Proposal includes a collaboration plan. The project addresses the chosen focus area from the ALFI. 1-The proposal is lacking key information about the proposed intervention and any relevant research. Proposal does not include responsible parties or detailed timeline. Proposal includes minimal details regarding collaboration. The project does not clearly fit within the chosen focus area from the ALFI.			

Project Goals and Evaluation	15		
-Does the proposal include detailed desired outcomes with specific references to objectives and key performance measures? -Does the proposal show support for long-term goals? -Does the proposal show how short-term goals contribute to long-term goals? Does the proposal show how the grant will support short-term goals? -Does the proposal demonstrate the capacity to collect, analyze, and report the required data? Does the proposal include a plan to determine success of the proposed project along stated metrics? Scoring Range 15- Proposal includes detailed description of desired outcome including specific references to objectives and performance measures. Proposal shows support for long-term and short-term goals and how they connect. The evaluation effort clearly examines the alignment between proposed interventions and desired outcomes. Additionally, project demonstrates promise of resulting in desired outcomes. 7- Proposal includes detailed description of desired outcomes; however, specific performance measures are unclear. The evaluation plan is adequately described but may be missing one or more of the following: plan or capacity to collect, analyze, and report necessary data. 1- Desired outcomes are unclear or project seems unlikely to produce desired outcomes. The evaluation plan is lacking sufficient detail and more than one of the following: plan or capacity to collect, analyze, and report necessary data; sufficient effort to examine the proposed project impact on desired outcomes.			

Budget Narrative and Budget Summary	10		
Budget requests are detailed and justified throughout the budget narrative. Resources are aligned and appropriate to the needs of the proposed project. Scoring Range 10 – Budget is complete with sufficient justifications and detail listed for each line item. 5 – Budget lacks sufficient detail but expenditures seem to be reasonable given the scope of the proposal. 1 – Budget is incomplete and/or unreasonable given the scope of the proposal.			
Sustainability	**25**		
The proposal provides a detailed explanation of how Ready to Reconnect grant services and activities will be sustained at the institution beyond the life of the mini-grant. The proposal shows evidence of integrating the project and associated long-term goals into the institutional culture. Scoring Range 25- Proposal includes a detailed explanation of how Ready to Reconnect grant services and activities will be sustained beyond the life of the mini-grant and integrated into the institutional culture. 12- Proposal includes intention for Ready to Reconnect grant services and activities to be sustained beyond life of the mini-grant and integrated into the institutional culture. 1- Proposal does not include sustainability plan.			
Total:	**100**		